

BOOK REVIEW

CANDACE SAVAGE. PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES R. PAGE. ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOAN A. WILLIAMS. 2011. **Prairie: A Natural History.** (ISBN: 978-1-55365-588-6, pbk.). Greystone Books, 2323 Quebec Street, Suite 201, Vancouver BC V5T 4S7, CANADA. (Orders: www.dmpibooks.com). \$29.95, 320 pp., color throughout, b/w illustrations, 7.5" × 10".

Prairie: A Natural History provides both a historical and present-day story of the North American prairie; a story that eloquently weaves together threads of botany, geology, biology, archaeology, chemistry, ranch management, and anthropology to produce a tapestry of the prairie. Savage's writing style will transport readers to the sites of her research. "Climb up there on a blue day in early September," she writes about the Frenchman Valley in southern Saskatchewan, "out and onto the bald steppe at the top, and the wind will slam against you as if it had a grudge against anything that dared to raise its head above the grasses." Corresponding pictures, maps, and botanical illustrations provide greater detail to this piece of art—augmenting readers' understanding and appreciation for this ecological wonder. The final details that truly make this book a piece of art are the side stories that compliment the main threads of investigation, e.g., Cheyenne folk lore, excerpts from Lewis and Clark's diaries, agricultural practices, and animal behaviors.

Savage has written a literary piece that belongs both on a coffee table and in the classroom. The chapters, which focus on individual elements of the prairie (e.g., soil, water, woodlands, animals, and land management), are written so they can stand alone, yet together they provide a holistic representation of a vastly complicated system. Both prairie novices and experts will find this book illuminating due to its diversity of topics and its inclusion of both basic and intermediate levels of subject matter. From simple definitions to more complex connections, this book will find its way into the hearts of those who read it.

Prairie: A Natural History argues for the conservation of one of the most endangered ecological systems. Savage provides a historical view of how the nature of the prairie has changed due to both natural and human-made conditions, and she delicately balances the severity of the issue of the prairie's survival with hope for the future. Individuals who ask the question, "Why save the North American prairie?" will be illuminated with each turn of the page.

—Amanda Stone Norton, Ph.D.,

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BOOKS RECEIVED/REVIEWS FORTHCOMING

ROBERT B. SHAW. PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL MONTGOMERY AND ROBERT B. SHAW. 2012. **Guide to Texas Grasses.** (ISBN: 978-1-60344-186-5, pbk. flexbound). Texas A&M University Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, U.S.A. (Orders: www.tamupress.com, 800-826-8911). \$45, 1080 pp., line drawings, distribution maps, color throughout, 7" × 10".

FRED DORTORT. 2011. **The Timber Press Guide to Succulent Plants of World: A Comprehensive Reference to More Than 2000 Species.** (ISBN: 978-0-88192-995-9, hbk.). Timber Press, Inc., The Haseltine Building, 133 S.W. Second Avenue, Suite 450, Portland, Oregon 97204-3527, U.S.A. (Orders: www.timberpress.com, 800-327-5680). \$49.95, 344 pp., color throughout, 8.5" × 11".

SCOTT CALHOUN. 2012. **The Gardener's Guide to Cactus: The 100 Best Paddles, Barrels, Columns, and Globes.** (ISBN: 978-1-609469-200-6, Pbk.). Timber Press, Inc., The Haseltine Building, 133 S.W. Second Avenue, Suite 450, Portland, Oregon 97204-3527, U.S.A. (Orders: www.timberpress.com, 800-327-5680). \$24.95, 227 pp., color throughout, 8" × 9".